

ME A

MEAN. *adj.* [mean, Saxon.]

1. Wanting dignity; of low rank or birth.
She was stricken with most obstinate love to a young man but of mean parentage, in her father's court, named Antiphus; so mean, as that he was but the son of her nurse, and by that means, without other desert, became known of her.
Sidney, b. ii.

This fairest maid of fairer mind;
By fortune mean, in nature born a queen.
Sidney.

Let pale-fac'd fear keep with the mean-born man,
And find no harbour in a royal heart.
Shaksp. Henry VI.

True hope is swift, and flies with swallow wings;
Kings it makes gods, and meaner creatures, kings.
Shak.

2. Low-minded; base; ungenerous; spiritless.
The shepherd knows not thunder from a tabor,
More than I know the sound of Marcius' tongue
From every meaner man.
Shaksp. Coriolanus.

Can you imagine I so mean could prove,
To save my life by changing of my love?
Dryden.

We fast not to please men, nor to promote any mean,
worldly interest.
Smalridge's Sermons.

3. Contemptible; despicable.
The Roman legions, and great Caesar found
Our fathers no mean foes.
Philips.

I have sacrific'd much of my own self-love, in preventing
not only many mean things from seeing the light, but many
which I thought tolerable.
Pope.

4. Low in the degree of any property; low in worth; low in power.
Some things are good, yet in so mean a degree of goodness,
that many are only not disproved nor disallowed of God
for them.
Hooker, b. ii.

The lands be not holden of her majesty in chief, but by a
mean tenure in fockage, or by knight's service at the most.
Bacon's Office of Alienation.

By this extortion he suddenly grew from a mean to a mighty
estate, inasmuch that his ancient inheritance being not one
thousand marks yearly, he became able to dispense ten thousand
pounds.
Davies on Ireland.

To peaceful Rome new laws ordain;
Call'd from his mean abode a sceptre to sustain.
Dryden.

5. [Moyen, French.] Middle; moderate; without excess.
He saw this gentleman, one of the properest and best-graced
men that ever I saw, being of middle age and a mean stature.
Sidney, b. ii.

Now read with them those organick arts which enable
men to discourse and write, and according to the fittest style
of lofty, mean, or lowly.
Milton on Education.

6. Intervening; intermediate.
In the mean while the heaven was black with clouds and
wind, and there was a great rain.
1 Kings xviii. 45.

There is French wheat, which is bearded, and requieth
the best soil, recompensing the same with a profitable plenty;
and not wheat, so termed because it is unbearded, is contented
with a meaner earth, and contenting with a suitable gain.
Carew on Cornwall.

MEAN. *n. f.* [moyen, French.]

1. Mediocrity; middle rate; medium.
Of 'tis seen,
Our mean securities, and our mere defects
Prove our commodities.
Shaksp. King Lear.

Temperance with golden square,
Betwixt them both can measure out a mean.
Shaksp.

There is a mean in all things, and a certain measure
wherein the good and the beautiful consist, and out of which
they never can depart.
Dryden's Dufresnoy.

But no authority of gods or men
Allow of any mean in poeie.
Roscommon.

Against her then her forces prudence joins,
And to the golden mean herself confines.
Denham.

2. Measure; regulation.
The rolling sea refounding soft,
In his big bafe them fitly answered,
And on the rock the waves breaking aloft,
A solemn mean unto them measured.
Fairy Queen.

3. Interval; interim; mean time.
But fith this wretched woman overcome,
Of anguish rather than of crime hath been,
Reserve her cause to her eternal doom,
And in the mean vouchsafe her honourable tomb.
Fairy Queen.

4. Instrument; measure; that which is used in order to any end.
Pamela's noble heart would needs gratefully make known
the valiant mean of her safety.
Sidney, b. i.

As long as that which Christians did was good, and no
way subject to just reproof, their virtuous conversation was a
mean to work the Heathens conversion unto Christ.
Hooker.

It is no excuse unto him who, being drunk, committeth
incest, and alledgeth that his wits were not his own; in as
much as himself might have chosen whether his wits should
by that mean have been taken from him.
Hooker, b. i.

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He tempering goodly well
Their contrary dislikes with loved means,
Did place them all in order, and compell
To keep themselves within their fundry reigns,
Together link'd with adamantine chains.
Spenser.

I'll devise a mean to draw the Moor
Out of the way, that your converse and business
May be more free.
Shaksp. Othello.

No place will please me so, no mean of death,
As here by Caesar and by you cut off.
Shaksp. Othello.

Nature is made better by no mean,
But nature makes that mean; so over that art
Which, you say, adds to nature, is an art
That nature makes.
Shaksp. Winter's Tale.

Your doctrine leads them to look on this end as essential,
and on the means as indifferent.
Lord Bolingbroke to Swift.

5. It is often used in the plural, and by some not very grammatically
with an adjective singular.
The more base art thou,
To make such means for her as thou hast done,
And leave her on such slight conditions.
Shaksp. Othello.

By this means he had them the more at vantage, being
tired and harraled with a long march.
Bacon's Henry III.

Because he wanted means to perform any great action, he
made means to return the sooner.
Davies on Ireland.

Strong was their plot,
Their parties great, means good, the season fit,
Their practice close, their faith suspected not.
Daniel.

By this means not only many helpless persons will be provided
for, but a generation will be bred up not perverted by
any other hopes.
Sprat's Sermons.

Who is there that hath the leisure and meant to collect all
the proofs concerning most of the opinions he has, so as
safely to conclude that he hath a clear and full view.
Locke.

A good character, when established, should not be relied in
as an end, but only employed as a means of doing still farther
good.
Atterbury's Sermons.

It renders us careless of approving ourselves to God by religious
duties, and, by that means, securing the continuance
of his goodness.
Atterbury's Sermons.

6. By all MEANS. Without doubt; without hesitation; without fail.
By no MEANS. Not in any degree; not at all.
The wine on this side of the lake is by no means so good as
that on the other.
Addison on Italy.

8. Means are likewise used for revenue; fortune; probably from
desimene.
Your means are very slender, and your waste is great.
Shaksp. Henry IV.

Rust sword; cool bluffs; and, parolles, live
Safe in flame! being fool'd, by foolry thrive;
There's place and means for every man alive.
Shaksp.

For competence of life I will allow you,
That lack of means enforce you not to evil;
And, as we hear you do reform yourselves,
Give you advancement.
Shaksp. Henry IV.

Effect did not build or adorn any house; the queen per-
chance spending his time, and himself his means.
Watson.

9. MEAN-TIME. In the intervening time: sometimes an
adverbial mode of speech.
The world shall burn, and from her ashes spring
New heav'n and earth.
Milton's Par. Lost, b. iii.

Mean-time the rapid heav'n's rowl'd down the light,
And on the shaded ocean rush'd the night.
Dryden.

Mean-time her warlike brother on the seas,
His waving streamers to the winds displays.
Dryden.

Mean time, in shades of night Æneas lies;
Care seiz'd his soul, and sleep forsook his eyes.
Dryden.

Mean-while I'll draw up my Numidian troops,
And, as I see occasion, favour thee.
Addison's Cato.

The Roman legions were all recalled to help their country
against the Goths; mean-time the Britons, left to shift for
themselves, and daily harraled by cruel inroads from the
Picts, were forced to call in the Saxons for their defence.
Swift.

10. MEAN. *v. n.* [meenen, Dutch.] To have in the mind; to
intend; to purpose.
When your children shall say, What mean you by this ser-
vice? ye shall say, It is the paffover.
Exod. xii. 26.

These delights if thou canst give,
Mirth, with thee I mean to live.
Milton.

11. MEAN. *v. a.*
To purpose; to intend; to design.
Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good,
to save much people alive.
Gen. i. 20.

And life more perfect have attain'd than fate
Meant me, by venturing higher than my lot.
Milton.

I practis'd it to make you taste your cheer
With double pleasure, first prepar'd by fear:
So loyal subjects often seize their prince,
Yet mean his sacred person not the least offence.
Dryden.

2. To

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2. To intend; to hint covertly; to understand.
I more easily forgo an argument on which I could delight
to dwell; I mean your judgment in your choice of friends.
Dryden's Aurengzebe.

Whatever was meant by them, it could not be that Cain,
as elder, had a natural dominion over Abel.
Locke.

MEANDER. *n. f.* [Meander is a river in Phrygia remarkable
for its winding course.] Maze; labyrinth; flexuous passage;
serpentine winding; winding course.

Physicians, by the help of anatomical dissections, have
searched into those various meanders of the veins, arteries,
and integrals of the body.
Hale's Origin of Mankind.

'Tis well, that while mankind
Through fate's perverse meander errs,
He can imagin'd pleasures find,
To combat against real cares.
Prior.

While ling'ring rivers in meanders glide,
They scatter verdant life on either side;
The vallies smile, and with their flow'ry face,
And wealthy births confess the floods embrace.
Blackmore.

Law is a bottomless pit: John Bull was flattered by the
lawyers, that his suit would not last above a year; yet ten
long years did Hocus steer his cause through all the meanders
of the law, and all the courts.
Arbutnot.

MEANDROUS. *adj.* [from meander.] Winding; flexuous.
MEANING. *n. f.* [from mean.]

1. Purpose; intention.
I am no honest man, if there be any good meaning toward
you.
Shaksp. King Lear.

2. Habitual intention.
Some whole meaning hath at first been fair,
Grew knaves by use, and rebels by despair.
Roscommon.

3. The sense; the thing understood.
The meaning, not the name, I call: for thou,
Not of the Muses nine.
Milton's Par. Lost, b. vii.

These lost the sense their learning to display,
And those explain'd the meaning quite away.
Pope.

No word more frequently in the mouths of men than con-
science; and the meaning of it is, in some measure, under-
stood: however, it is a word extremely abused by many, who
apply other meanings to it which God Almighty never in-
tended.
Swift's Miscel.

MEANLY. *adv.* [from mean.]

1. Moderately; not in a great degree.
Dr. Metcalfe, master of St. John's College, a man meanly
learned himself, but not meanly affectioned to set forward
learning in others.
Achan's Schoolmaster.

In the reign of Domitian, poetry was but meanly culti-
vated, but painting eminently flourished.
Dryden's Dufresnoy.

2. Without dignity; poorly.
It was the winter wild,
While the heav'n-born child,
All meanly wrapt in the rude manger lies.
Milton.

The Persian state will not endure a king
So meanly born.
Denham's Sophy.

3. Without greatness of mind; ungenerously.
Would you meanly thus rely
On power, you know I must obey.
Prior.

4. Without respect.
Our kindred, and our very names, seem to have some-
thing desirable in them; we cannot bear to have others think
meanly of them.
Watts's Logick.

MEANNESS. *n. f.* [from mean.]

1. Want of excellence.
The minister's greatness or meanness of knowledge to do
other things, standeth in this place as a stranger, with whom
our form of common prayer hath nothing to do.
Hooker.

This figure is of a later date by the meanness of the work-
manship.
Addison on Italy.

2. Want of dignity; low rank; poverty.
No other nymphs have title to mens hearts,
But as their meanness larger hopes imparts.
Waller.

Poverty, and meanness of condition, expose the wisest to
scorn, it being natural for men to place their esteem rather
upon things great than good.
South's Sermons.

3. Lowness of mind.
The name of servants has of old been reckoned to imply
a certain meanness of mind, as well as lowness of condition.
South's Sermons.

4. Sordidness; nigardiness.
MEANLY, perf. and part. pass. of to mean.

By Silvia if thy charming self be meant;
If friendship be thy virgin vows extent:
O! let me in Aminta's praises join;
Her's my esteem shall be, my passion thine.
Prior.

MEASURE. *n. f.* [Probably a corruption of measure: as, a mea-
sure of herrings is five hundred.

MEASLES. *n. f.* [Ingrubilla, Latin.]

Measles are a critical eruption in a fever, well known in
the common practice, and bear this name, which is a dimi-
nutive of morbus, because it hath been accounted a species

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of such malignant and pestilential fevers, to which compara-
tively this is in a much inferior degree.
Quincy.

My lungs
Coin words till their decay, against those measles,
Which we disdain should tetter us, yet seek
The very way to catch them.
Shaksp. Coriolanus.

Before the plague of London, inflammations of the lungs
were rife and mortal, as likewise the measles.
Arbutnot.

2. A disease of swine.
One, when he had an unlucky old grange, would needs
sell it, and proclaimed the virtues of it; nothing ever thrived
on it, no owner of it ever died in his bed; the swine died of
the measles, and the sheep of the rot.
B. Johnson's Discovery.

3. A disease of trees.
Fruit-bearers are often infected with the measles, by being
scorched with the sun.
Mortimer's Husbandry.

MEASLED. *adj.* [from measles.] Infected with the measles.
Thou vermin wretched,
As e'er in measled pork was hatched;
Thou tail of worship, that dost grow
On rump of justice as of cow.
Hudibras, p. i.

MEASLY. *adj.* [from measles.] Scabbed with the measles.
Last trotted forth the gentle swine,
To ease her against the stump,
And dimly was heard to whine,
All as the scrubb'd her measly rump.
Swift.

MEASURABLE. *adj.*

1. Such as may be measured; such as may admit of computa-
tion.
God's eternal duration is permanent and indivisible, not
measurable by time and motion, nor to be computed by num-
ber of successive moments.
Bentley's Sermons.

2. Moderate; in small quantity.
MEASURABLENESS. *n. f.* [from measurable.] Quality of ad-
mitting to be measured.

MEASURABLY. *adv.* [from measurable.] Moderately.
Wine measurably drunk, and in season, bringeth gladness
of the heart.
Ecclef. xxxi. 28.

MEASURE. *n. f.* [mesure, French; mensura, Latin.]

1. That by which any thing is measured.
A taylor's news,
Who stood with shears and measure in his hand,
Standing on slippers, which his nimble haste
Had falsely thrust upon contrary feet,
Told of many a thousand.
Shaksp. King John.

A concave measure, of known and denominated capacity,
serves to measure the capaciousness of any other vessel.
Holder.

All magnitudes are capable of being measured; but it is
the application of one to another which makes actual mea-
sures.
Holder on Time.

When Moses speaks of measures, for example, of an ephah,
he presumes they knew what measure he meant: that he him-
self was skilled in weights and measures, arithmetic and geo-
metry, there is no reason to doubt.
Arbutnot on Coins.

2. The rule by which any thing is adjusted or proportioned.
God's goodness is the measure of his providence.
Mare.

I expect, from those that judge by first sight and rash mea-
sures, to be thought fond or insolent.
Glanville's Scep.

3. Proportion; quantity settled.
Measure is that which perfecteth all things, because every
thing is for some end; neither can that thing be available to
any end, which is not proportionable thereto; and to propor-
tion as well excels as defects are opposite.
Hooker.

I enter not into the particulars of the law of nature, or its
measures of punishment; yet it is certain there is such a law.
Locke.

4. A stated quantity: as, a measure of wine.
Be large in mirth, anon we'll drink a measure
The table round.
Shaksp. Macbeth.

5. Sufficient quantity.
I'll never pause again,
Till either death hath clos'd these eyes of mine,
Or fortune given me measure of revenge.
Shaksp. Macbeth.

6. Allotment; portion allotted.
Good Kent, how shall I live and work
To match thy goodness? life will be too short,
And ev'ry measure fail me.
Shaksp. King Lear.

We will not boast of things without our measure, but ac-
cording to the measure of the rule which God hath distribu-
ted to us, a measure to reach even unto you.
2 Cor. x. 13.

7. Degree.
Ought, not surpassing human measure, say.
Milton.

Our religion sets before us not the example of a stupid
flock, who had, by obstinate principles, hardened himself
against all pain beyond the common measures of humanity,
but an example of a man like ourselves.
Tillotson's Sermons.

I have laid down, in some measure, the description of the
old world.
Abbot's Description of the World.

There is a great measure of discretion to be used in the per-
formance of confession, so that you neither omit it when your

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